



Saint Stephen's welcomes everyone who wishes to follow Christ, worship together, grow in faith and share God's love through service to others.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

MORNING PRAYER

FEAST OF CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

Wednesday 13 Sept. 2023 9:30 AM



Cyprian ([/'sɪpriən/](#); **Latin**: *Thaschus Caecilius Cyprianus*; c. 210 – 14 September 258 AD^[1]) was a [bishop of Carthage](#) and an [early Christian](#) writer of [Berber](#) descent, many of whose Latin works are extant. He is recognized as a [saint](#) in the [Western](#) and [Eastern](#) churches.

He was born around the beginning of the 3rd century in [North Africa](#), perhaps at [Carthage](#),^[5] where he received a classical education. Soon after converting to Christianity, he became a bishop in 249. A controversial figure during his lifetime, his strong pastoral skills, firm conduct during the [Novatianist](#) heresy and outbreak of the [Plague of Cyprian](#) (named after him due to his description of it), and eventual [martyrdom](#) at Carthage established his reputation and proved his sanctity in the eyes of the Church.

His skillful Latin rhetoric

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Announcements and Welcome

Opening Sentences *(Please stand as you are able)*

Leader: Send out your light and your truth, that they may lead me, and bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling. *(Psalm 43:3)*

Confession of Sin

Deacon/Leader: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

(Short Silence may be kept.)

All: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Deacon/Leader: Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

The Invitatory and Psalter

Leader: Lord, open our lips.

People: **And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Jubilate *(For the Gloria):*

**Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands; *
serve the Lord with gladness
and come before his presence with a song.**

**Know this: The Lord himself is God; *
he himself has made us, and we are his;
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.**

**Enter his gates with thanksgiving;
go into his courts with praise; *
give thanks to him and call upon his Name.**

**For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; *
and his faithfulness endures from age to age.**

The Lessons *(Please be seated)*

First Lesson: A Reading from the Book of James (4:11-17)

Do not speak evil against one another, brothers and sisters. Whoever speaks evil against another or judges another, speaks evil against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy. So who, then, are you to judge your neighbor? Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making money." Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin.

Reader: The Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God

Psalm 116:10-17

10 How shall I repay the Lord *

for all the good things he has done for me?

11 I will lift up the cup of salvation *

and call upon the Name of the Lord.

12 I will fulfill my vows to the Lord *

in the presence of all his people.

13 Precious in the sight of the Lord *

is the death of his servants.

14 O Lord, I am your servant; *

I am your servant and the child of your handmaid;

you have freed me from my bonds.

15 I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving *

and call upon the Name of the Lord.

16 I will fulfill my vows to the Lord *

in the presence of all his people,

17 In the courts of the Lord'S house, *

in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.

Hallelujah!

Gospel Lesson:

Deacon/Reader: The holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew
John (10:11-16)

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away-- and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd."

Deacon/Reader: The Gospel of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God

Reflection on readings / homily (optional)

The Apostles Creed:

Deacon/Leader: Let us say together the Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth;

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Prayers

Leader The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Leader Let us pray.

Almighty God, who gave to your servant Cyprian boldness to confess the Name of our Savior Jesus Christ before the rulers of this world and courage to die for this faith: Grant that we may always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us and to suffer gladly for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Suffrages (B)

V. Save your people, Lord, and bless your inheritance;

R. Govern and uphold them, now and always.

V. Day by day we bless you;

R. We praise your name for ever.

V. Lord, keep us from all sin today;

R. Have mercy upon us, Lord, have mercy.

V. Lord, show us your love and mercy;

R. For we put our trust in you.

V. In you, Lord, is our hope;

R. And we shall never hope in vain.

Collect for Guidance

Leader: O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done your will with cheerfulness during the day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Other Intercessions and Thanksgivings:

Birthdays, Anniversaries, Healing, Travel, Gratitude

Prayer of General Thanksgiving (All in unison)

Leader: Let us Pray

All: Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love.

We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side.

We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us.

We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone.

Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom. Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know Christ and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things. Amen.

Deacon/Leader: People of St. Stephen's, what does God call us to do?

People: We are called to love and serve.

Deacon/Leader: Let us bless the Lord. Alleluia, alleluia!

People: Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Deacon/Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all for evermore.
Amen.

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led to his being considered the pre-eminent Latin writer of [Western Christianity](#) until [Jerome](#) and [Augustine](#).^[6]

Early life

Cyprian was born into a rich pagan [Berber \(Roman African\)](#),^[5] Carthaginian family sometime during the early third century. His original name was Thascius; he took the additional name [Caecilius](#) in memory of the [priest](#) to whom he owed his conversion.^[7] Before his conversion, he was a leading member of a legal fraternity in Carthage, an orator, a "pleader in the courts", and a teacher of rhetoric.^[8] After a "dissipated youth", Cyprian was baptized when he was thirty-five years old,^[2] c. 245 AD. After his [baptism](#), he gave away a portion of his wealth to the poor of [Carthage](#), as befitted a man of his status.

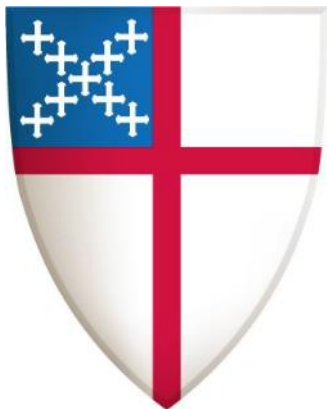
In the early days of his conversion, he wrote an *Epistola ad Donatum de gratia Dei* and the *Testimoniorum Libri III* that adhere closely to the models of [Tertullian](#), who influenced his style and thinking. Cyprian described his own conversion and baptism in the following words:

When I was still lying in darkness and gloomy night, I used to regard it as extremely difficult and demanding to do what God's mercy was suggesting to me... I myself was held in bonds by the innumerable errors of my previous life, from which I did not believe I could possibly be delivered, so I was disposed to acquiesce in my clinging vices and to indulge my sins... But after that, with the help of the water of new birth, the stain of my former life was washed away, and a light from above, serene and pure, was infused into my reconciled heart... a second birth restored me to a new man. Then, in a wondrous manner, every doubt began to fade... I clearly understood that what had first lived within me, enslaved by the vices of the flesh, was earthly and that what, instead, the Holy Spirit had wrought within me was divine and heavenly.^[9]

Contested election as bishop of Carthage

Not long after his baptism he was [ordained](#) a deacon and soon afterwards a priest. Sometime between July 248 and April 249, he was elected [bishop of Carthage](#), a popular choice among the poor who remembered his patronage as demonstrating good [equestrian](#) style. However, his rapid rise did not meet with the approval of senior members of the clergy in Carthage,^[10] an opposition that did not disappear during his [episcopate](#).

Not long afterward, the entire community was put to an unwanted test. Christians in North Africa had not suffered persecution for many years; the Church was assured and lax. In early 250, the [Decian persecution](#) began.^[11] [Emperor Decius](#) issued an edict, the text of which is lost, ordering sacrifices to the gods to be made throughout the [Empire](#).^[12] Jews were specifically exempted from that requirement.^[13] Cyprian chose to go into hiding, rather than face potential execution. While some clergy saw that decision as a sign of cowardice, Cyprian defended himself by saying that he had fled in order not to leave the faithful without a shepherd during the persecution and that his decision to continue to lead them, although from a distance, was in accordance with divine will. Moreover, he pointed to the actions of the Apostles and Jesus himself: "And therefore the Lord commanded us in the persecution to depart and to flee; and both taught that this should be done, and Himself did it. For as the crown is given by the condescension of God, and cannot be received unless the hour comes for accepting it, whoever abiding in Christ departs for a while does not deny his faith, [Cont. online](#)



ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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